

April 10, 2005

Freedom

Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan



*First Lady makes
surprise visit
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Practicing a quick reaction force exercise at East River Range in Bagram, Soldiers from C Co., 3rd Batt., 116th Inf. Regt., 1st Bgd., 29th ID, lay down suppressive fire on targets March 24, 2005.



Spc. Harold Fields, CJTF-76 Combat Camera

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Freedom ***Watch***

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CFC-A Commander - Lt. Gen. David Barno
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A-10 Warthogs use IR targeting

Pilots help save villagers during severe flood

Story by
Capt. Catie Hague
455th Air Expeditionary Wing

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - More than 200 villagers were rescued from flood waters March 18 after A-10 Thunderbolt IIs from the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing out of Bagram Airfield helped identify and report the victims' exact location.

One hour into a close air support mission, two planes were redirected to coordinates about 70 kilometers northeast of Kandahar to help search for survivors.

"We were on the tanker when we got a call from the (Air Support Operations Center), which passed us coordinates for an area where the Army was trying to rescue several hundred folks from rising flood waters," said Capt. Andy Taylor, a pilot with the 75th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. "We headed that way, coordinating with the Army helicopters working in the area. They wanted us to look for people stranded on the ground by the flood.

"There were several areas that had become islands and were continuing to be swamped over by raging waters," he said. "We used the [infrared] feature on our targeting pods to locate several groups of people, marking those areas with IR to highlight for the helos where the folks were stranded."

The A-10s worked the area for about an hour, helping Army personnel locate and rescue hundreds of Afghan villagers.

"Our targeting pod and the A-10's long loiter time allowed us to successfully carry out this support mission," said Capt. Chad Anthony, a 75th EFS A-10 pilot and flight lead during this rescue operation.

"The pod allows us to see great detail day or night, and the IR marker lets us, and those we're supporting, identify what we're looking at," said Anthony. "We practice a lot with the pod, so we were well prepared for Friday night's mission. Also, there aren't many fighters that can stay in a target area as long as we can."

A-10s carry the Litening II targeting pod, explained Capt.

Allen Duckworth, a pilot with the 75th EFS. This pod possesses both infrared and camera sensors. It incorporates a laser designator/range finder and an IR laser pointer which highlights targets with a flash visible to night-vision devices.

The pods allowed the pilots to find stranded people and point them out to the U.S. and Afghan military on the ground.

It was these capabilities that made it possible for Bagram's A-10 pilots to pinpoint exactly where survivors were located in order to secure their rescue.

"This mission took the Hog to an entirely new level," said Col. Warren Henderson, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group commander. "We've always carried out [combat search and rescue]," he said, "but we're definitely conducting more non-traditional roles here in Afghanistan – in this case, using the A-10's capability of pinpoint accuracy to save lives versus take lives."

"I know, at times, we tend to focus on the more violent aspect of our job," said Taylor. "But it was great being able to help so many Afgan people survive such a dire situation."



Department of Defense photo

Floodwaters ravaged a number of small towns near Deh Rawod as three days of intense rain caused the banks of the Helmand River to overflow by as much as three kilometers. The flooding left countless people homeless and stranded hundreds on small islands. Coalition forces worked through the night to rescue trapped people. More than 200 stranded Afghans were airlifted to safety.

U.S. and Afghan forces rescue villagers

Story and photos by
Spc. Tiffany Levesque
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FIRE BASE TYCZ, Afghanistan - Coalition and ANA forces rescued 300 Afghans trapped by floodwaters in the village of Lublan March 18.

After U.S. forces heard about the rain causing the flooding and the trapped people, they headed to the area to check out the situation, said Staff Sgt. Pease Dennis, 96th Civil Affairs. "We quickly realized that many locals were trapped on an island created by the flooding and called in for support from the Afghan National Army, Afghan special forces and (the U.S. Army's) C Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment."

As other Coalition. Soldiers picked up people in helicopters, Soldiers from C. Co. and the ANA provided security.

"We set up a perimeter and pulled security, until civil affairs came in that next morning," said Herrea. "ANA pulled security from outside the perimeter."

The next morning civil affairs met with the district and provincial chiefs to coordinate places for the refugees to stay.

"We came bearing blankets, water, food, and medicine to help care for the refugees," said Dennis.

Within the last few years the locals have seen very little rain and the river has been down, so they set up their villages around the riverbank, said Dennis. With the recent rain, the river flooded and stranded the locals on islands.

The effort progressed quickly and efficiently, said Sgt. Cody Jones, a team leader for C. Co.

"Without all of us working together and without us here, the situation could have turned deadly and ended badly," said Jones. "The locals were appreciative and it made us feel good to have a positive effect in their lives."

Three airdrops, one day

Humanitarian missions conducted

Story and photos by

Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

416th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

KARSHI-KHANABAD AIR BASE, Uzbekistan - C-130 Hercules airlifters with the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here flew three humanitarian airdrop missions March 21, bringing needed supplies and water to remote areas of Afghanistan.

"Flying three airdrop missions in one day is nearly unprecedented for us," said 774th EAS Commander Lt. Col. Jesse Simmons, from the Georgia Air National

Deployment Systems - 12 to each plane. The bundles were built and inspected on the C-130s prior to departure by Army parachute riggers with the 24th Quartermaster Company from the Southern European Task Force located at Vicenza, Italy.

The aircrews came from Yokota Air Base, Japan, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, and the Texas Air National Guard at Fort Worth.

The first crew to take off was the Texas ANG crew. Flying a C-130 from the Delaware ANG at New Castle, the crew embarked on a flight of about four and a half hours. Capt. Brad Freeman, the crew's pilot, said that in keeping with the aircrew's duties, the mission was routine.

"The fact that this mission was performed in a combat environment, on a strange route, to an unfamiliar drop-zone presented the greatest challenge," said Freeman. "This mission provided an excellent opportunity to perform a real-world service for the

Army, while applying the techniques and procedures honed through home-station training."

The Texas crew navigated through the Afghan mountains and made their drop on time and on target.

"Since we are a crew from North Texas, with little terrain to fly around, the mountainous areas along the route and surrounding the

drop-zone area provided a great challenge," said Freeman.

"My crew and I feel fortunate to have been able to perform an airdrop mission in theater and would love the opportunity to do it again soon."

The second crew to take off for their airdrop mission was from Yokota. Their mission included a follow-on cargo mission after the airdrop. The whole process lasted just over seven hours. The mission pilot, Capt. Scott Turner, said everything went well with their airdrop.

Turner said that the Yokota-based crew has been flying together for more than three months in the OEF combat environment. He said the camaraderie built between them has helped make successful missions like this possible.

"An actual combat airdrop is a rare opportunity in the C-130 community, and this was a perfect challenge to put our training to the ultimate test," said Turner. "The airdrop mission was a great success, and we were honored to have been chosen to fly it."

Success was also the result for the mission flown by the Elmendorf crew. The crew arrived at their drop zone



U.S. Army Spc. Ben Jamieson, a parachute rigger with 24th the Quartermaster Co. from the Southern European Task Force at Vicenza, Italy, checks over parachutes on Container Deployment System bundles he and other Soldiers built.



Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Crystal Campbell, a C-130 Hercules loadmaster with the 774th EAS, prepares a CDS bundle prior to a humanitarian airdrop mission in a remote region of Afghanistan.

Guard at Savannah. "That many airdrop missions is more than we would normally do in a given day, but we did it and the missions were very successful."

The C-130s were loaded up by air terminal operations center Airmen with more than 63,500 pounds of water combined on 36 Container

on time on a mission that lasted about four and a half hours to the mountains of Afghanistan.

"The high terrain and an unfamiliar drop zone provided the biggest challenge on our mission, but we got it there on time and on target," said mission pilot Capt. David Miller.

Master Sgt. Robert Emerson, the flight engineer on the Elmendorf crew, said the success of all the crews meeting their drop zones was a testament to the training and professionalism of everyone involved.

"We can't do this without the entire team doing their job from start to finish," said Emerson. "Whether it is our Army friends building the best CDS bundles we can deliver, the ATOC loading it up, or the C-130 maintenance and aircrew people having the plane ready and flying, success takes everyone."

Calling for CAS

Soldiers learn new skills

Story and photo by

Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl

17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE RIPLEY, Afghanistan - "Continue dry," crackled through the radio as Spc. Jarrod Stranahan guided British pilots onto a target.

Stranahan, a forward observer for Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, is one of 20 Soldiers who participated in emergency close air support training at Forward Operating Base Ripley March 4.

Infantry units are taught to rely on the Air Force's joint tactical air controllers when they need close air support, but a controller may not always be available when the Soldiers need one.

In emergency situations, these Soldiers may have to call to pilots who will eliminate an enemy threat.

"I want to ensure these guys know proper communication procedures," said Air Force 1st Lt. Michael R. Colom, the 25th Air Support Operations Squadron's air liaison officer to 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt.

Colom led the training held at the base. "They need to know who to call, how to call and what to say."

As an A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot,

Colom knows what the pilot is looking for. But as an ALO, he knows what it means to be the person on the ground, guiding the pilots in.

"The purpose of this training is to teach the Soldiers how to help the pilots find what they're talking about when they're calling for close air support," he said.

As a platoon leader, 1st Lt. Eric Hong knows he's the first one responsible for calling for CAS if something were to happen to his JTAC.

"When we're on the ground, if our qualified person goes down, I'm the next in command to call for CAS," said Hong, a platoon leader in Co. B.

The training doesn't stop with Hong. Each of his squad leaders also participated in the training. They will, in turn, teach it to their Soldiers.

Colom discussed how different situations may require close air support, and taught them how to direct the pilots onto a target using cardinal directions and descriptions of the surrounding area.

After practicing among themselves and scoping out targets with a MK-7 laser range finder, it was time for the ultimate test.

The Soldiers selected targets and contacted British gr-7 Harrier pilots. The Soldiers took turns describing their targets to the pilots, giving the



Spc. James D. Mayer, a forward observer for 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., consults his GPS as he recites his location to pilots during emergency close air support training.

men in the air the directions they would need to accurately engage the target. They also spoke to A-10 pilots, which allowed the Soldiers to identify different terminology used by different forces.

"This training has definitely helped me to understand that each pilot has a different way of talking," said Staff Sgt. Ben Johnson, a Co. B squad leader. "I know if I'm ever in the situation where I need to call for close air support, I'll be able to talk to any of them."

Though they may never be called upon to use their new acquired skills, they're confident in their ability to do so.

"The more you know on the battlefield," said Johnson, "the better off you are."

Enduring Voices

How is the change in weather affecting your mission?



Marine Cpl. Phil Heifer
HMLA-773, Aviation Ordnance
"Warmer weather makes handling and storing ordnance easier."



Sgt. Thomas J. Davis
25th Military Police Co.
"The roadways now are a little washed out from the weather ... There are a lot of things to look out for, like mines washing up on the roadways."



Cpt. Todd F. McKay
870th Movement Control Team
"We're hoping the rain stops soon so our job is less chaotic."



Air Force Staff Sgt. Gloria Hofilena
Defense Logistics Agency
"With the weather warming up our traveling schedule has picked up and we are busier."

Camp Eggers:

Kabul Compound renamed in honor of fallen Soldier

Story by

Sgt. 1st Class Darren D. Heusel

105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KABUL, Afghanistan - He may be gone, but U.S. Army Capt. Daniel W. Eggers is not forgotten.

Senior military officials here renamed the Kabul Compound "Camp Eggers" March 20, in honor of the 28-year-old former Green Beret who was killed May 29, 2004, near Kandahar after his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device.

"Over 100 American and Coalition soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and special operators have lost their lives since the 9-11 attacks in the execution of the Global War on Terror and Operation Enduring Freedom," Lt. Gen. David Barno, commander of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, told a crowd of more than 300.

Also killed with Eggers were Sgt. 1st Class Robert J. Mogensen, Spc. Joseph A. Jeffries and Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Brian J. Ouellette.

Eggers, a Special Forces detachment commander, and Mogensen, 26, a Special Forces weapons sergeant, were both assigned to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C. Jeffries, 21, was a psychological operations specialist assigned to the 320th Psychological Operations Company, an Army Reserve unit based in Portland, Ore. Ouellette, 37, was assigned to Navy Special Warfare Group Two of Little Creek, Va.

"Capt. Eggers was killed leading his Special Forces A Team in Zabul Province, a

truly joint team working hard to help secure a critical part of this country and provide support to the Afghan government in a highly contested area," said Barno. "Their loss struck all of us here at the time particularly hard, as it was such a grievous loss of life in a single incident.

"At their memorial service in Bagram, we were all struck at the pain suffered by the unit at the loss of so many men from such a tight group, clearly a 'Band of Brothers.'"

Eggers, a native of Cape Coral, Fla., was commissioned in May 1997 after graduating from The Citadel Military College in South Carolina where he majored in history. He completed Special Forces training in 2002 and was assigned to the 1st Bn., 3rd SFG in May 2003. Following his first deployment to Afghanistan in March 2003, Eggers was assigned to Company A as a detachment commander.

"Capt. Eggers is remembered as a dedicated

Special Forces Soldier and consummate professional," said Barno. "His deployment as an ODA commander in the south was a key component of our overall strategy last year to open that part of the country up to registration for the Afghan presidential elections - a move designed to provide the Afghan people the opportunity for each of them to choose their own future, free from oppression.

"The sacrifice of these brave men is a tribute to all of our Coalition forces who risk their lives daily. Their missions, carried on by their teams and thousands of other troops here, turned the tide in Afghanistan last year. Capt. Eggers' legacy is that freedom -- that success -- in this rugged land so far from his home."

The ceremony concluded with the crowd observing a moment of silence for all those who have lost their lives in Afghanistan and the playing of the "Ballad of the Green Beret."

Religious Services Around the CJOA

Kabul

Sunday

0630 - Christian Worship Service
1030 - Christian Worship Service (U.S. Embassy Marine Lounge)
1430 - Christian Worship Service
1530 - Small Group Study 301
1600 - Small Group Study 201

Tuesday

1530 - Small Group Study 301

Wednesday

1430 - Small Group Study 401

Friday

0830 - Latter-Day Saints
1330 - Small Group Study 101
1430 - Coffee House Ministry

Saturday

1130 - Catholic Mass

* All times

Zulu/GMT

Camp Phoenix

Sunday

0430 - Catholic (Italian)
0530 - Non-Denominational Prot.
1330 - Catholic (French)
1530 - Non-Denominational Prot.

Tuesday

1430 - Bible Study

Wednesday

1430 - Gospel Bible Study

Saturday

1430 - Gospel Worship Service

FOB Salerno

Sunday

0300 - Foundations Bible Class
0400 - Traditional Prot. Worship
0530 - Catholic Mass
0730 - Latter-Day Saints
0830 - Gospel Service
1400 - Inspirational Movie Night

Saturday

1500 - Contemporary Prot.

Bagram Airfield

Sunday

0400 - Liturgical Prot.
0530 - Roman Catholic Mass
0830 - Latter-Day Saints
0700 - Traditional Prot.
1115 - Korean Language Prot.
1300 - Gospel Service

Monday

1400 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday

1400 - Gospel Bible Study
1545 - Prot. Music Rehearsal

Wednesday

1600 - Catholic Music Rehearsal

Thursday

1430 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal

Friday

1430 - Jewish Prayer
1500 - Women's Bible Study

Saturday

0500 - Seventh-Day Adventist
1330 - Korean Choir Rehearsal
1515 - Roman Catholic Mass
1630 - Prot. Choir Rehearsal
Daily, Monday-Friday
0700 - Roman Catholic Mass
0745 - Noon-Day prayer

Kandahar Airfield

Sunday

0430 - Catholic Mass
0500 - Bible Study (325th FSB)
0630 - Prot. Worship
1330 - Gospel Choir Practice
1400 - Sunday School
1530 - Gospel Service

Monday

1300 - Gospel Choir Practice

Tuesday

1430 - Purpose-driven Life Study
1300 - Gospel Choir Practice
1430 - Praise Team Practice
1530 - Bible Study

Wednesday

1300 - Gospel Choir Practice
1430 - Praise Team Practice
1530 - Prot. Worship

Thursday

1430 - Praise Team Practice
1500 - Latter-Day Saints

Friday

0830 - Islamic Prayers
1330 - Jewish Sabbath Prayers

Saturday

0400 - Men's Breakfast
1300 - Catholic Mass
1430 - Praise Team Practice

Daily, Monday-Friday

0330 - Catholic Mass

ANA opens recruiting center in historic Panjshir Valley

Story and photo by
Master Sgt. D. Keith Johnson
Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan
PAO

PANJSHIR VALLEY, Afghanistan — As one more important step toward Afghan independence, the latest National Army Volunteer Center has opened within sight of the tomb of Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Lion of Panjshir.

The Panjshir Valley is a region steeped in the history of Afghan independence. It was the center of Mujahedin rebel resistance against the Soviets in the 1980s, and then against the Taliban a decade later.

The valley is a natural fortress: a lush green valley surrounded by sheer rock faces. Dozens of destroyed tanks still litter the road, burnt-out testimonies to the violent fighting that raged in the region as the Soviets battled to subdue the Panjshir and repeatedly failed.

The NAVC opening ceremony was attended by several Afghan National Army officers, Coalition leaders, and local elders and mullahs.

Speaking at the ceremony were Panjshir Provincial Governor Mohammad Wasil; U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. John Brennan, chief of the Office of Military Cooperation - Afghanistan; ANA Maj. Gen. Aziz Rahman, commander of the ANA Recruiting Command; and ANA Brig. Gen.

Mohammad Amin, chief of the Religious and Cultural Affairs department of the Ministry of Defense.

Wasil noted that the opening of the NAVC corresponded with the start of spring, and also with the history of the valley.

"I hope, as we set the example during the holy fight against the Russian invasion and during the resistance against the Taliban, that the Panjshir NAVC will set another example in the recruiting process among the NAVCs in the country," he said.

NAVCs are planned for each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. The Panjshir NAVC is the 27th center now open for recruiting. Recruits for the ANA are brought into the NAVC until they are transported to the Kabul Military Training Center where they will be assigned to a kandak (battalion).

At KMTC, the soldiers attend basic training for six weeks, followed by six additional weeks of advanced training. The kandak will then be assigned to one of the five regional commands throughout the country.

Brennan, attending his first NAVC opening since taking command of the Office of Military Cooperation -- Afghanistan in March, talked about the

purpose of the new NAVC.

"This National Army Volunteer Center will reach out to the young men of Panjshir, to help them join a new army made up of all the major ethnic groups of Afghanistan - Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkman and more," said Brennan.

The Panjshir Valley was the birthplace of Massoud, and it is also his final resting place. Massoud, a revered leader and hero during the resistance against the Russians and the Taliban, was killed by assassins two days before Sept. 11, 2001. Massoud was the subject of



A local mullah chants a prayer at the start of the ceremony for the grand opening of the Panjshir National Army Volunteer Center.

emotional speeches by both Rahman and Amin, evoking tears from many in attendance, and touching upon the significance of the valley.

"I hope, as the brave people of this historic valley earned honor during times of war," said Amin, "that you will fully participate in the ANA and, alongside of your brothers, take part in the security of Afghanistan."



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Marine Lance Cpl. Nicolas A. Fernandez, from Cuba, Mo., pulls guard around a clinic in Khowst Province during a medical assistance visit Feb. 21. Fernandez is assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Kaneohe Marine Corps Station, Hawaii. During the medical visit, coalition forces provided critical medical assistance to over 660 Afghans.

*Capt. Juanita Chang
CTF Thunder*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



First Lady Laura Bush meets with Afghan President Hamid Karzai to discuss the importance of women's education at the presidential palace March 30. "This is more important than hundreds of millions of dollars," said Karzai.

First Lady surprises troops: Speaks about International Women's Month, tours Afghan Women's Teacher Training Institute

Story and photos by
Sgt. James-Denton Wyllie
20th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — First Lady Laura Bush made an unannounced visit to the troops and people of Afghanistan March 30 in recognition of International Women's Month.

During her six-hour trip, Bush spoke to teachers and female students at the Afghan Women's Teacher Training Institute, met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and ate dinner with the troops at Bagram Air Field.

In her speech to a full house of Afghan women at the AWTTI, the former teacher turned First Lady said, "We are only a few years removed from the rule of the terrorists, when women were denied education and every basic human right. That tyranny has been

replaced by a young democracy, and the power of freedom is on display across Afghanistan."

During her visit to the institute, Bush discussed the current educational situation in Afghanistan and possible methods of improvement with local

teachers. She also spoke to teachers-in-training and toured the dormitories and craft centers.

To cap off her visit to the AWTTI, Bush witnessed the signing of joint education initiatives by American Secretary of Education Margaret

First Lady Laura Bush shakes the hand of an Afghan girl during her visit to the Afghan Women's Teacher Training Institute March 30. Bush traveled to the AWTTI in recognition of International Women's Month.





First Lady Laura Bush is presented with a hand-made rug during her visit to the Afghan's Women's Teacher Training Institute March 30. While at the AWTTI, Bush met with teachers, toured the dormitories, and gave a speech to students.

Spellings, Afghan Minister of Education Noor Mohammed Qarqeen, and Afghan Minister of Higher Education Dr. Sayed Amir Shah Hassanyaar.

"From today's small beginnings, we expect the institute will yield great things," she said.

President Karzai echoed the First Lady's sentiments during a photo opportunity with members of the press.

"This matters much more than hundreds of millions of dollars," he said.

At BAF, Bush closed out

First Lady Laura Bush meets with a group of Afghan women during her trip to the Afghan Women's Teacher Training Institute March 30. Bush made the trip in recognition of International Women's Month.



First Lady Laura Bush eats dinner with American troops at Bagram Airfield March 30. Bush made the unannounced trip to Afghanistan in recognition of International Women's Month.

her trip with a steak dinner and some conversation with the troops. During the dinner, the First Lady took time to personally thank all of America's warriors for their hard work and dedication.

The First Lady's visit will have a lasting effect, said Spc. Taryn Holt of the 1-11 Area Support Group.

"America is safer because the men and women of Bagram are on duty."

"It was an honor for her to come here," said the Austin, Texas, native. "During a time when the women of this country are trying to find their place, she has come and given them something to look up to."

Spc. Vernice L. Hall of the 29th Joint Logistic Command agrees that

Bush's visit was a positive experience.

"She showed the soldiers here that they are appreciated," said Hall. "It makes us know that they care about us back home."



Army brings doctors, medicine to village

Story and photos by
Spc. Tiffany Levesque
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FIRE BASE TYCZ, Afghanistan - In a country where preventive medicine is not readily available, the Task Force Victory Surgeon Cell can make a big difference by going to remote villages to treat local people.

"We are here to identify any medical problems the Afghans may have, treat what we can, and refer the serious cases to the hospitals," said Dr. (Col.) Richard Hines, a family practice doctor with the cell.

The surgeon cell is comprised of Soldiers who practice many forms of medicine. Doctors, veterinarians, medics, and entomologists are a few of the professionals in the surgeon cell here, said Hines.

During operations, four stations are set up to control the flow of people and animals: a women's clinic, a men's clinic, a well-check tent for children and a livestock clinic, said Maj. Jamie Blow, a preventive medical officer with the



Maj. Jaime Blow prepares to give a child de-worming medication. Blow visited Fire Base Tycz as part of the Surgeon Cell's scheduled medical evaluation and treatment program.

surgeon cell.

"At the well-check station, we give the children de-worming medicine and a 30-day supply of vitamins," she said. "If they are sick and need to be treated they are seen in the clinics."

Nearly all the children in Afghanistan have intestinal worms, said Dr. (Col.) Stephen Jones, the commander of the Surgeon Cell. These worms stunt growth and inhibit nutrition and learning ability.

"Respiratory diseases and intestinal worms are rampant here," he said. "To help fight them we are working alongside Afghan doctors and giving them materials to teach personal hygiene."

At the livestock clinic, the animals are de-wormed and vaccinated. This is one way to help prevent the spread of diseases, said Jones.

Spc. Rodrigo Vasquez, from Karnes City, Texas, makes sure the men and children stay in groups at the checkpoint so that they can be seen by the surgeon cell.



My brother Abraham

Story and photo by
Spc. Tiffany Levesque
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FIRE BASE TYCZ, Afghanistan - When Army doctors from the Surgeon Cell at Bagram Airfield visited FB Tycz March 23 to provide medical examinations and treatment of the local Afghans, two children, made a lasting impression.

Ariana Raofi's eyes misted with tears while she watched Subergul carry his crippled little brother into the clinic. Raofi, a contract interpreter with the Army, held back tears when she translated what was wrong with young Abraham to the doctors.

"Abraham was able to walk until a few years ago," said Subergul to the interpreter. "We've been to doctors in Pakistan and they cannot tell us what is wrong."

Subergul continued to explain the decline in his younger brother's health and all the dead ends they have come across.

Dr. (Col.) Richard Hines, a family-practice doctor with the surgeon cell, checked Abraham and told Subergul that his brother would probably never walk again.

"He either has cerebral palsy or polio," said Hines. "Both conditions can be treated for relief, but they can't be cured."

See Abraham, next page



Dr. (Col.) Richard Hines checks to make sure nothing is wrong with Abraham's stomach. Subergul's family has taken Abraham to many different doctors to find out what is wrong with him.

Engineers oversee projects, ensure standards met

Story and photos by
By Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Outside Kandahar Airfield, a new Afghan National Army installation is taking shape.

While contractors work to build the installation that will house an entire brigade, the Army Corps of Engineers maintains watch, ensuring projects are completed to standard.

"Our job is to administer the contract," said Maj. Don Ollar, Kandahar Airfield's resident engineer. "We make sure the customer gets what he wants."

This process entails a team of specialized engineers

every step in the construction of the facility.

"I know that the quality of the materials used in the project will affect durability," said Vladimir Lisitsa, senior geologist for the project.

Every day, Lisitsa and the other engineers go out and inspect the construction site, ensuring things are going according to plans. Lisitsa checks to ensure contractors are using the proper blends to make mortar, concrete and asphalt. Other engineers check the wiring, while still others inspect trenches for



Maj. Don Ollar inspects wires at the new ANA construction site outside Kandahar Airfield. Ollar and other engineers carefully monitor the construction project to ensure quality.

representative for quality assurance. "We provide project oversight.

"With our variety of backgrounds, we all mesh together – mesh our experience and knowledge," he said.

This variety of backgrounds includes an Afghan civil engineer, Sharif Ullah, who works as both the quality control supervisor and interpreter, facilitating communication between the more than 1,600 local workers on the project and the engineers.

Ullah inspects the minute details of the construction project, well aware of the consequences of contractors using wrong materials.

Each of the engineers knows how critical their job is to the construction of the new facility that

will someday soon support the Afghan National Army.

"I'm a bit of a flag-waver," said Freer. "I served in the Air Force, and never had the opportunity to serve overseas in a hostile environment. I like knowing that I could serve my country further."

Abraham

In Afghanistan, children do not receive immunizations for common childhood diseases, and only five percent are born in medical facilities, said Col. Stephen Jones, commander of the surgeon cell. Polio and cerebral palsy are common and usually go untreated.

After Raofi told Subergul the diagnosis, she asked what the family could do for Abraham. Hines showed Subergul exercises to help keep the boy's muscles from locking and losing blood flow.

He also explained what cerebral palsy and polio are and why he could not do anything to help Abraham besides giving him vitamins — and helping to exercise his arms, legs, and neck.

Subergul told Raofi that he and his family are very thankful that Americans are here and helping bring peace to his country.

"Thank you for helping us," said Subergul.



A contracted worker applies spackling to a barracks building on the ANA installation that is under construction outside Kandahar Airfield. Engineers from the Army's Corps of Engineers inspect every step of the project to ensure it is completed according to specifications.

working together to oversee the project and provide quality assurance and control. From civil engineers to bioengineers, electricians to plumbers, the team is carefully monitoring

underground sewage systems.

"We want to ensure the ANA gets the best possible product," said Edward K. Freer, the Corps of Engineers construction rep-

Bedford Boys

Soldiers carry on tradition of forefathers



1st Lt. Jonathan Toland pulls forward security during a stop on a patrol in Ghazni Province. The snowy conditions are a challenge for the Soldiers because the roads are slippery and full of snow. Overcoming challenges is part of the history of this unit.

Story and photo by
By Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment

GHAZNI PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan - The Army is rich in history and tradition -- Soldiers of today look at those who served before them with pride and respect.

The Soldiers of the unit known as the "Bedford Boys" know that they have much to live up to.

Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, is serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. The company is comprised mostly of Soldiers from Bedford, Va.

During the invasion of Europe on D-Day, June 6, 1944, this National Guard unit was among the first to hit Omaha Beach. In the first moments of the bloody battle, 19 Soldiers from Bedford gave their lives for their country.

The town lost the most Soldiers per capita of any city in the country. Since then, the Soldiers of this company have been known as the Bedford Boys.

"This is the first time the unit has deployed since World War II," said Staff Sgt. Ken Asbury, a Co. C squad leader.

"It's interesting that our unit was on the front lines of fighting for the freedom of Europe, and here, over 60 years later, we are fighting for the freedom of the Afghan people," he said. "It's great to be part of helping a country get out of poverty it's been in for hundreds of years."

Things are different now than they were in World War II, said Sgt. Michael Walker, a Co. C team leader.

"The job might not be as demanding as it was for the Soldiers assaulting the beach on D-Day, but we are doing the same job of fighting for

freedom and keeping the peace here," said Walker.

Bedford residents are proud of their Bedford Boys.

"When we got the orders to mobilize, the executive officer of the original Bedford Boys came and shook all the Soldiers' hands," said 1st Lt. Steele McGonegal, executive officer of Co. C. "The people from Bedford are very proud.

They gave their boys once and live with that every day."

Sgt. Anthony Dooley, an anti-armor team leader for Co. C, grew up in Bedford.

"Everyone holds the memory," he said. "I grew up listening to my grandparents telling me the stories about 'their boys.' When I got off active duty, there was no question what unit I wanted to be a part of within the National Guard."

"The job might not be as demanding as it was for the Soldiers assaulting the beach on D-Day, but we are doing the same job of fighting for freedom and keeping the peace."

The people from Virginia have been visibly supportive of their deployed troops.

"The battalion has received 60 percent of the mail that comes into (Bagram Airfield)," said Asbury. "Out of that, Charlie Company has received about 60 percent."

With so many past heroes coming from the unit, the Soldiers feel a sense of duty to do well for their community.

"We're professional, and we are going to do the best we can to accomplish the mission because that is what we do," said McGonegal.

The Bedford Boys want to complete the mission here in Afghanistan, not only for the sense of pride it brings them as Soldiers, but also to carry on the tradition of bravery set by those men over half a century ago.

"It's important to do the best we can for the guys to our left and right," said Walker. "It's almost as important to be able to go home at the end of this (deployment) and be able to look at the people in the community and say, 'Yes, your boys did good work.'"

Women's history month

Airfield hosts international celebration

Story and photo by
Pvt. Cora Gerth
20th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - American and Coalition forces celebrated International Women's History Month by holding a Women's Bazaar and Women's Day Commemoration honoring women from all over the world March 25 and 26.

Women began serving in the U.S. Armed Forces in 1901 by enlisting in the Army Nurse Corps. In 1948 women were allowed permanent status in all the armed services.

Throughout the years, women in the military have come a long way. Women are now pilots, mechanics, command sergeants major and officers. Currently, more than 350,000 women comprise approximately 15 percent of the active duty, reserve and guard units of the U.S. Armed Forces.

In honor of International Women's

History Month, a women's bazaar for Afghan women was organized by Sgt. Jamila Hodges, TSA Force Unit. "This is our first ever women's bazaar. The women were scared to participate due to threats and rumors circulating throughout their villages," said Hodges. "But change is a focus, and we must be patient."

Celebrating International Women's History Month is very important in Afghanistan. "The women of Afghanistan need to see that American Soldiers are trying to create change. When we tell them and then show them (how to change), it is easier for them to mimic our actions. If we take baby steps, it will change to bigger steps, which leads to improvement," said Hodges.

Zuhra Hussine, a vendor at the bazaar, had a smile on her face as she completed a sale. "I will go back to my village and let them know the business here is good and we are so happy. The people here are so good to us," said Hussine.



Col. Rita Meyer the commander of the 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group, buys handmade goods from Zuhra Hussine

The commemoration had an array of speakers from the U.S. military, New Zealand army, Canadian armed forces, Egyptian army, Republic of Korea army, German army, and the Afghan Minister of Women's Affairs.

"A ceremony like this is important because it gives recognition to females that they deserve, and it shows people that we are educated," said Staff Sgt. Yania Bates, U.S. Army Southern European Task Force (Airborne). "This shows Afghan women that they can make a difference, and that they can have a voice."

Soldier realizes dream

Story and photo by
Pvt. Cora Gerth
20th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — As Spc. Rachel Jump maintains her CH-47 Chinook, there's something unique that stands out — she is the only female crew chief in sight.

Jump joined the military six years ago at the age of 17. She joined the Illinois National Guard Unit in Peoria after years of watching war movies with her father, and being intrigued by the sight of Chinooks and Blackhawks.

"I knew that when I would join the military that I wanted to have a job with aircraft, so I enlisted as a 15U-helicopter repairer," said Jump.

Soon after enlisting, Jump changed her military occupational specialty to a

68D- an aircraft power train repairer. During advanced individual training, she was the only female in the class.

Now she is in F Company, 159 Aviation "Big Windy" from Giebelstadt, Germany.

As her experience progressed, she moved from mechanic to the flight platoon, where she earned a position as crew chief.

Jump hasn't let being the minority get in the way of her job.

"I am hard to offend," she said. Jump knows that she is successful because of her ability to adapt to her environment and overcome obstacles.

As a crew chief, Jump is responsible for keeping her Chinook operational and ready at all times. Before a flight, she ensures that weapons, ammunition, food, water, and other supplies are stocked. While in flight, she

conducts air space surveillance by making sure the aircraft is all clear on both sides. Her other tasks include assisting passengers, strapping down cargo and stabilizing loads.

Jump is passionate about being a crew chief.

"I love to fly," she said. "You get to see different places from different angles. This is something not everyone can experience."

Seeing the smiles and hard work Jump puts into her job, it's evident just how much she cares about flying.

About other females said, "Work hard, study, and pursuing this career, Jump you can do it."



Spc. Rachel Jump covers one of the engines on her CH-47 Chinook. Jump worked her way up to crew chief from helicopter repairer.

Airmen provide protection

Firefighters ready to roll at moments notice

Story and photo by
Sgt. Douglas DeMaio
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — When service members board or step off aircraft here, there are always a handful of Air Force firefighters observing the airfield from a distance.

Parked on a dirt runway at Forward Operating Base Salerno for hours at a time, these Airmen stand ready to put out any fire that may erupt.

Ensuring fire protection for the airfield and base is essential to operations, said Air Force Firefighter Staff Sgt. Eric Frey of 376th Air Expeditionary Wing, Manas, Kyrgyzstan.

The Salerno department is split into two teams. Fire trucks 10 and 13 are each filled with thousands of gallons of water and stand ready to drench anything in a matter of seconds.

Day after day, these four Airmen sit in hot, dusty fire engines waiting for the moment they may be called to action to save someone's life.

"Almost everyone picks this job because they want to help people," said Frey.

Trained in fire science and emergency response, these emergency medical technicians work through various levels of certification to perform missions ranging from hazardous material operations to fire inspection.

"Our job is unique because we spend most of our time training and earning certification," said Frey.

Apart from spending most of their month-long duty here working, these firefighters work out and get to know one another before rotating back to Manas, something the men are not accustomed to with their regular unit.

"Here you get to know the people you work with best," said Airmen 1st Class Alex Robinette, who is on temporary duty with the 376th AEW from Travis Air Force Base, Calif. "In bigger units, we normally work shifts, so getting to know the firemen you work with is different."

The deployed experience, however rare, is a good foundation for the firefighters to gain a better understanding of other military branches, Robinette said.

"Perhaps the most interesting part of our job here at Salerno is working with our sister services," Frey said. "Being here and seeing how they operate gives me a greater appreciation for what the Army and Marines do."

Frey, from McChord AFB, Wash., said he would like to teach at the Firefighter Technical School, Goodfellow AFB, Texas. He notes that experience here will help others in his profession understand the need to train and earn certification that will help contribute to Coalition efforts like Operation Enduring Freedom.



Air Force firefighters observe a C-130 on the flight line of Forward Operating Base Salerno.

Flight safety involves passengers

Story by
Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN - For every person participating in Operation Enduring Freedom, riding on some type of aircraft is inevitable.

While on an aircraft, every passenger has the responsibility to maintain a high level of safety.

"Riding with us isn't like a normal airline," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Gloria Myers, a C-130 Hercules crew chief. "The passenger is very important to the overall safety of the aircraft."

Myers said on every aircraft the crew chiefs are the primary individuals that run the back of the aircraft.

"It is essential that you take all commands from us," said Myers. "The back of the aircraft and flight line are the two primary areas we need attention from (the passenger)."

Crew chiefs will always run a safety brief prior to boarding both rotary and fixed-wing aircraft.

"It is very important that the passengers listen to our safety brief," said Marine Sgt. Gabe Walker, crew chief for the 462nd Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron. "We are putting out information that could save your life."

In addition to the safety briefing before the flight, passengers should have hearing protection. Although

the crew chiefs try hard to have a supply on hand, they ask that all passengers try to come prepared.

Securing hearing protection at fire bases is sometimes easy because their flight terminals have a larger supply on hand than at the aircraft.

One of the largest safety concerns for crew chiefs and passengers is being around the perimeter of the aircraft while it's still running, said Walker. This is a time when communication between passengers and crew chiefs is critical.

"Sometimes mission dictates we conduct loading and unloading of the aircraft while it is still hot," said Walker.

Passengers must not approach the aircraft during this time until directed by the crew chief, said Walker.

"Many times on the (landing zones) there is a lot going on for us," said Walker. "You have to stay patient. We know you are there, but we have to follow certain procedures before we load passengers."

Walker said passengers also need to wear eye protection if they are on a landing zone while the aircraft is running.

"A lot of the (landing zones) here in Afghanistan are just gravel and dirt," said Walker. "The aircraft can easily kick up a lot of (debris)."

"We recommend you remain at least 100 yards from the landing zones. Takeoff and landings are the

See *Safety*, next page

CTF Thunder inducts Soldiers to Order of St. Barbara

Story by

Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhén

CTF Thunder Public Affairs Office

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Combined Task Force Thunder inducted five Soldiers into the Order of St. Barbara March 19.

Lt. Col. Bobby Mundell, Maj. Duke Davis and Tony Migos of the CTF Thunder headquarters staff, and Staff Sgts. Robert Flynn and Maurice Brittain of Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment were inducted into the Order of St. Barbara.

"This is a great recognition of individuals who have made contributions to the field artillery," said Col. Gary H. Cheek, commander of CTF Thunder. "All of these folks represent some enormous contributions."

According to legend, St. Barbara was a woman of incomparable beauty who was beheaded by her father, Dioscurus, for her belief in Christianity.

As he walked back from the execution, Dioscurus was struck by lightning and his body consumed. It is believed that St. Barbara sent the lightning bolt that struck down Dioscurus, and she became the patron saint who offers refuge in times of danger, from thunderstorms, fire and sudden death.

When gun powder began being used in the western world, St. Barbara was invoked for aid against accidents resulting from explosions. Since some of the early artillery pieces often blew up instead of firing their projectiles, St. Barbara became the patron of artillerymen.

To pay homage to the saint, every year the artillery inducts a handful of upstanding Soldiers into the Order of St. Barbara - a "traditional brotherhood of stonehurlers, archers, catapulters, rocketeers and gunners."

Cheek said the two noncommissioned officers are great trainers of Soldiers and great leaders of field artillerymen in combat operations here in Afghanistan.

"They are ones who have served with distinction for a long time, manning the guns," he said.

Cheek credited the three officers with being part of the reason the division artillery headquarters has been so successful in its mission in Afghanistan.

Mundell and Davis are both infantry officers, and Migos is an intelligence officer.

"The three officers are ones that have served in different ways and made different contributions to the field artillery," he said.

Brittain, the fire direction section chief for Fox Battery, said it meant a

lot to him as a field artilleryman to be inducted into the order.

"To consider yourself a great artilleryman, this would be the best honor you could receive," he said.

Brittain said when he reflects on his accomplishment, it will mean more to him to know he was inducted into the order while in a combat zone.

Safety

worst time in terms of debris flying."

Even after takeoff it is not a time to stop thinking about safety.

Since the average flight throughout Afghanistan lasts only a short period of time, they ask all passengers to stay seated if possible and keep the communication with the flight crew to a minimum.

"We don't mind helping, but the passengers aren't our only concern in flight," said Myers.

The one time the crew chiefs do need immediate communications is when passengers see a possible malfunction on the aircraft or ground threat.

"If you see something, let us know," said Walker. "No problem is too small for us to take a look at."

"We all have the same goal in mind: get to our destination safe," said Myers. "As long as you follow our leads and remain patient, it will happen."

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

This is great.

Dari

Besyar aali ast
(Bess-yahr ah-lee ahst)

Pashtu

Der aali dah
(Dehr ah-lee dah)

An Afghan community of any size is almost certain to have a kabob shop, a fixture in Afghan cities and towns. The Afghan equivalent to fast food, kabobs are of lamb, mutton, or beef (or, in the United States, chicken) and can consist of chunks of meat skewered and roasted or ground beef formed around the skewer. A kabob shop will feature several kinds of kabobs, along with bread and possibly vegetables or salad.

Freedom Watch

April 10, 2005



Ingenuity accomplishes the mission

Airman 1st Class Sergio Meneses, from the 25th Air Support Operations Squadron, pulls a raft across a river in Siminay in the Oruzgan Province, on the way to clear caves in the area. Photo by Sgt. Lester Esteves, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf.